

**Opening Remarks**  
**Presented by NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth**  
**On the occasion of the WCO Asia-Pacific Waste Project Closing Workshop**  
**The Mantra on Murray Hotel**  
**Monday May 29, 2023**

Good morning. I am Naito Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth, representing the Government of Japan.

Before I make my remarks, I would like to acknowledge several important people here today. I would like to recognize the great efforts of the WCO Compliance Sub Directorate represented by Ms. Anna Kobyłeczka, Technical Officer, Environment Program Manager, and the technical expertise of Ms. Nancy Isarin. Also, I acknowledge the esteemed speakers present including the WTO Director of the Trade and Environment Division together with representatives of the following organizations and regional bodies:

- ASEAN CEC Working Group
- UNODC
- Basel Stockholm Convention Regional Centre in Indonesia
- UNEP
- UNESCAP
- INTERPOL
- World Bank
- ICC and
- Australian Customs and Environmental Authorities.

It is my honour and pleasure to make opening remarks at this World Customs Organization Asia-Pacific Plastic Waste Project High-Level Workshop.

I wish to express my gratitude to the WCO Secretariat for the invitation and for the efforts made by the APPW project, which, despite the difficulties caused by the pandemic, now culminates in this closing workshop.

I am also pleased that the project has progressed well thanks to the significant efforts made by the participating members - Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia and Thailand as well as Australia, an APPW Project observer and I express my special appreciation to Australia for agreeing to be the host of this workshop.

At the G7 Hiroshima Summit in Japan 10 days ago, the leaders' expressed determination to meet global challenges and set the course for a better future, with special emphasis on rule based international order, and discussed on the war in Ukraine, nuclear non-proliferation, economic security, climate change, health, food security and technology. It has been clear Russia's invasion of Ukraine has created new global challenges such as energy and food shortages, and our shared concerns about global issues such as the security environment and climate change are growing even further.

As the issue of combating marine plastic litter is one of the pressing global issues, the Japanese Government is leading global efforts to address it. At the G7 Hiroshima Summit chaired by Japan, we were able to set an ambitious target of zero additional plastic pollution by 2040.

The Osaka Blue Ocean Vision, which was proposed at the 2019 G20 Osaka Summit and which has been shared by 87 countries and regions so far, is another example of initiatives by Japan. To materialize this vision, the Government of Japan has launched the Marine Initiative to support global efforts to combat marine plastic litter effectively, and is providing various support programs to promote waste management, marine litter recovery and innovations. Through these programs, more than 17,000 waste management personnel around the world have developed skills under the initiative through training and other programs, to date.

The issue of the international trade in plastic waste has reached a major turning point due to the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision, China's move to ban imports of waste materials including waste plastics, and the revisions to annexes of the Basel Convention.

The WCO APPW project has developed eight National Implementation Plans with recommendations to participating customs authorities to improve their preparedness for new regulations and procedures on plastic waste.

In addition, the WCO APPW has seen a Regional Action Plan prepared with the aim of guiding the implementation of the project's recommendations.

We understand that the draft Regional Action Plan will be discussed at this regional high-level workshop to ensure that its implementation could lead to the next steps within participating countries as well as in the Asia and Pacific region.

Finally, this important project is a good example of utilizing the expertise of the WCO and is highly appreciated by the Japanese Government, which is making financial contributions. We would like to thank the WCO once again for its efforts in making the project a success and I am convinced that the workshop will be more fruitful with the cooperation of the Australian Border Force.

Thank you for your attention.

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